A

REFUTATION of the *Objections* Against MORAL GOOD and EVIL.

IN A

SERMON

Preach'd at the

CATHEDRAL-CHURCH of St. *Paul*, *October* the Third, 1698.

BEING

The Seventh of the LECTURE for that Year, Founded by the Honourable *Robert Boyle*, Esq;

By *JOHN HARRIS*, M.A. and Fellow of the ROYAL-SOCIETY.

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JEREM. ix. 24.

Let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he underſtandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord, who exerciſe loving kindneſs, judgment and righteouſneſs in the earth: for in theſe things do I delight, ſaith the Lord.

IN theſe Words, as I have already ſhewed, there are theſe two Things conſiderable:

I. A Suppoſition that God is capable of being known to us by his Attributes.
II. An Account of ſome of thoſe Attributes which he exerciſeth in the Earth, and in which he delights.

On the former of theſe, I did, in my laſt Diſcourſe endeavour to remove the Objections againſt the Attributes of God in general, and to ſhew that they are plainly diſcoverable by Reaſon, and agreeable to Philoſophical Truth. As to the Second,

The Attributes of God mentioned here by the Prophet, and which he is ſaid to delight to exerciſe in the Earth.

I think it not neceſſary to diſcourſe particularly of them, having in my laſt Sermon ſhewn how They, as well as all other Excellencies and Perfections which we can diſcover in the Creatures, muſt of neceſſity be in the Divine Nature in the greateſt Perfection;

becauſe they are all derived from Him. But that which I judge will be more proper to be done now, as being agreeable to my Deſign of Anſwering the Atheiſtical Objections in their Natural Order, will be from hence to Remove two Great Barrs to the true Knowledge of God and of his Attributes, which Sceptical and Unbelieving Men have here placed in the Way. For indeed, till this be done, no true Notion of God or of his Perfections can be eſtabliſhed in Mens Minds; nor any Ground fixt whereon to build a Rational Belief of Natural or Revealed Religion, or any kind of Worſhip of the Supream and Almighty Being. And theſe Two great Objections of our Adverſaries are,

1. That there is in reality no ſuch thing as Moral Good and Evil; but that all Actions are in their own Nature indifferent.

2. That all things are determined by Abſolute Fatality: And that God himſelf, and all Creatures whatſoever, are Neceſſary Agents, without having any Power of Choice, or any real Liberty in their Nature at all.

Theſe are two of the ſtrongeſt Holds of Atheiſm and Infidelity, which 'tis therefore abſolutely neceſſary to batter down and demoliſh: And theſe do in ſome ſenſe communicate with and run into one another; and indeed the former plainly follows from the latter. But however, they being very frequently made uſe of diſtinctly by the Oppoſers of Religion, and the *former* being maintained by ſome Perſons whom I cannot find do hold the *latter*; I ſhall endeavour to Refute them ſeverally. Beginning with that which I have firſt propoſed; *viz.*

That

That there is in reality no ſuch things as Moral Good and Evil, but that all Actions are in their own Nature purely Indifferent.

And this Poſition our Adverſaries are very expreſs in maintaining, as will ſufficiently appear by their own Words.

The Virtues that Men extoll ſo highly, ſaith Mr. *Blount* (*a*), *are not of equal weight and value in the Balance of Nature; but that it may fare with them, as with Coin made of Copper or Leather: which tho' it may go at a high Rate in one Country by Proclamation; yet will it not do ſo in another, for want of Intrinſick Value.* 'Tis plain enough what he means by this; but how this Aſſertion will agree with his allowing ſome things to be φύσει δίκαια (*b*), Good and Juſt in their own Nature, as he doth in his Account of the Deiſts Religion, let the Admirers of *thoſe Contradictory Oracles of Reaſon*, conſider. But, indeed, 'tis no new or uncommon thing with theſe kind of Men to make Contradictory Propoſitions ſubſervient to their Purpoſes: as they often do in this very Caſe. For when you upbraid them with a Disbelief of Revelation, they will ſay, that 'tis enough for any Man to live up to the Principles of Natural Religion, and *to adhere inviolably to all things*, φύσει δίκαια; for thoſe are things that are Obligatory on all Mankind, and not like Revealed Truths, mere Political and Topical Inſtitutions. Whereas at another time, if you tell them of ſome groſs Immoralities that they are Guilty of, and which are plainly contrary to Reaſon, and to the cleareſt Light of Nature; Then they will anſwer you, That *Good* and *Evil* are only *Thetical things*; which receive their very Eſſence from Human Laws or Cuſtoms

(*a*) *Anima Mund.* in Or. of Reaſon, *p.* 117.

(*b*) Oracles of Reaſon, *p.* 89.

ſtoms only, but that by Nature nothing is either Good or Bad; and that all Actions are alike and Indifferent; ſo hard is it, as an Excellent Perſon obſerves (*a*), *to contradict Truth and Nature, without contradicting ones ſelf.* But to go on,

(*a*) A. Biſh. *Tillotſ.* Serm. Vol. 4. p. 315.

Spinoza takes care to deliver himſelf very plainly, as to this Matter. *Bonum & Malum nihil Poſitivum in Rebus ſc. in ſe conſideratis indicant* (*b*). And in another Place, he tells us, *Poſtquam homines ſibi perſuaſerunt, omnia quæ fiunt, propter ipſos fieri, id in unaquâq; re præcipuum judicare debuerunt, quod ipſis, utiliſſimum; & illa omnia præſtantiſſima æſtimare, à quibus optimè afficiebantur. Unde has formare debuerunt Notiones, quibus Rerum naturas explicarunt,* ſc. Bonum & Malum, *Ordinem & Confuſionem, &c.* (*c*). And the ſame thing alſo he aſſerts in many other places.

(*b*) *Op. Poſthum*, p. 164.

(*c*) *Ibid* p. 37. *Vid. etiam*, p. 171, 185, 360, &c.

Mr. *Hobbs* alſo expreſly maintains, That *there is nothing ſimply nor abſolutely Good or Evil, nor any common Rule about them to be taken from the Objects themſelves, but only from the Perſon; who calleth that Good which he likes or deſires, and that Evil which he hates,* &c. (*d*) *Nothing,* ſaith he, *is in its own Nature Juſt or Unjuſt, becauſe naturally there is no Property, but every one hath a Right to every thing* (*e*); And therefore he defines *Juſtice to be only keeping of a Covenant* (*f*). And in another place he tells us, *That Good and Evil are only Names that ſignifie our Appetites and Averſions; which in different Tempers, Cuſtoms and Doctrines of Men are different* (*g*). The ſame thing he aſſerteth alſo in many other places of his Writings (*h*). And this Doctrine the Tranſlator of *Philoſtratus* is ſo fond of, that, tho' he be ſometimes very deſirous of being thought an Original, yet

(*d*) *Leviath.* p. 24.

(*e*) *Ibid.* p. 63, 64.

(*f*) P. 73.

(*g*) *Ibid* p. 79.

(*h*) *Vid. Hum. Nature*, p. 38. *Element. de Cive* c. 1. §. 2.

yet he Tranſcribes this entirely from Mr. *Hobbs* (*a*); as indeed Mr. *Hobbs*, according to his uſual way, had before, in a great meaſure done from *Sextus Empiricus*; who in very many places declares that it was the Opinion of the Scepticks, *that there was nothing Good or Evil in it ſelf* (*b*). And he endeavours to prove this Point, by the very ſame Arguments which the Modern Aſſertors of this Opinion, do make uſe of (*c*).

(*a*) *Blount's* Life of *Apollonius*, p. 151.

(*b*) ἡμῶν ἀγαθὸν τι ἢ κακὸν εἶναι λεγόντων οὐδὲν —— *Pyrrh. Hypot.* p. 46. And again, p. 147. οὐκ ἔστι φύσει ἀγαθόν.

(*c*) *Vid. Sext. Emp. Adv. Math.* p. 450, 451, &c. 462, 463, &c.

And tho' Mr. *Hobbs* boaſt much of his Notions about theſe things to be new, and originally his own; yet 'tis plain, that it was the Old Atheiſtick Doctrine long before *Plato*'s Time. For he tells us, *Lib.* 2. *De Rep.* p. 358. That there were a ſort of Men who maintained, That by Nature Men have a boundleſs Liberty to act as they pleaſe, and that in ſuch a ſtate, to do that to another which is now called an *Injury*, or a piece of Injuſtice, would be *Good*; tho' to receive it from another would be *Evil*: And that Men did live a good while at this rate, but in Time finding the Inconveniencies of it, they did agree upon Laws, in order to live peaceably and quietly with one another. And then that which was enacted by theſe Laws, was called Juſt, and Lawful. Ὀνομάσαι τὸ ὑπὸ τῶ νόμω ὁπίταγμα νόμιμόν τε καὶ δίκαιον.

This is the Principle we ſee of thoſe Atheiſtical Men: which tho' ſome of them do now and then take Care to conceal, or to expreſs a little cautiouſly, yet they underſtand one another well enough: and ſo indeed may any one do them, that thinks it worth his while to conſider ſeriouſly of, and to ſearch into the Bottom of the Matter. And this is truly one of the Great Depths of Atheiſm and Infidelity: 'Tis a Principle that when once thoroughly underſtood and imbibed,

imbibed, confirms a Man in the Disbelief of all manner of Religious Obligation. For he that hath once ſwallowed down this abominable Tenet, will, as ſome of the lately mentioned Writers diſcover themſelves to do, believe nothing of the Deity, but that he is *Almighty and Arbitrary Power*, or a *Blind fatal and Neceſſary Agent*: Either a Being that makes his Will his Law, and who is not guided in his Actions or Diſpenſations, by the Dictates of Reaſon nor by any Rules of Juſtice and Goodneſs: or elſe one that properly ſpeaking, hath *no Ends nor Deſigns* at all (*a*); but is *without any Underſtanding* (*b*), *Freedom of Will*, *Choice* or *Wiſdom*; one who cannot poſſibly help doing as he doth, but is impelled in every thing by abſolute Neceſſity. So that there being (as according to theſe Principles there cannot be) no Goodneſs in the Deity, there can be none any where: But all Actions, antecedent to Human Laws, will be Indifferent. And the Obligation that Men are under to Human Laws being only, as *Hobbs* ſaith, from Fear of Puniſhment; no doubt a Man of this wicked Perſwaſion will ſtick at the Perpetration of no Villany nor Immorality, that will any way advantage himſelf, and which he can commit ſecretly and ſecurely; but will purſue his own Private Benefit and Intereſt (the only Good he underſtands, and thinks himſelf obliged to mind) by all poſſible Means and Endeavours.

(*a*) *Spinoz. Op. Poſthum.* p. 36.
(*b*) *Oſtendam--ad Dei naturam neq; Intellectum neq; Voluntatem pertinere. Ibid.* p. 18. *Vid. Etiam*, p. 29.

This therefore being the Caſe before us, it will very much concern us to Return a fair Anſwer to, and fully to Refute this Dangerous Objection againſt all Religion, and indeed againſt the Good and Welfare of all Governments, and all Civil Societies: and which I wiſh we had not ſo much reaſon to believe, is fixt in the Minds of too many amongſt us. And

And in order to do this the more clearly and effectually, it will be neceſſary firſt truly to ſtate the Point, and to diſ-engage it from ſome Difficulties and Perplexities which our Adverſaries have deſignedly clouded it withall. Say they whatever is the Object of any Man's Deſires that he calls Good; as alſo whatſoever is in any reſpect Beneficial and Advantageous to him. And on the other hand, that which is hurtful and prejudicial to him, and is the Object of his Hatred and Averſion, that he calls Evil, and ſo doubtleſs it is to him. Now, ſay they further, Since that which may be *Good* to one Man, or *deſired* by him *now*, may be *Evil* to another, or may by the very ſame Perſon, be hated and ſhunned at *another Time*; it plainly follows, that the Nature of *Good and Evil*, is perfectly precarious, and will be as various and changeable as the different Humours and Inclinations of Mankind can make it. And thus Mens Actions will be denominated accordingly. Every one accounting that a *Good one* which he likes, which promotes his Intereſt, and is conducible to his Advantage: And calling that an *Evil one*, which he diſapproves of, and which is contrary to his Intereſt and Inclination.

To all which, I ſay, that theſe Men run their Argument a great way too far, and conclude much more from it than the Nature of the thing will bear. For allowing as a firſt Principle *that all Men deſire Good*, and that they cannot do otherwiſe; Allowing alſo that Apparent or ſeeming Good hath the ſame Effect as real Good, while it is the Object of any particular Man's Deſires: Nay, allowing alſo this *Apparent Good* to be a very precarious Thing, and to depend very much on the different Humours, Tempers and Incli-

nations of Mankind; which is the whole Baſis on which theſe Writers found their Argument. I ſay, Granting all this, it doth not come up to the Queſtion between us, nor form any Real Objection againſt the natural difference between Good and Evil, and the Eternal Obligation of Morality; for the Point in diſpute is not whether ſuch an Eſſential and Immutable Difference as this now ſpoken of, be diſcernible in *all* the Actions of Mankind; for 'tis readily allowed that there are a great many *Indifferent*, and which are neither *good* nor *bad* in their own Natures, but may be *either*, as Circumſtances determine. This, I ſay, is not the Caſe; but whether there be not *ſome* ſuch Actions, as do plainly diſcover themſelves to the Unprejudiced Judgment of any Rational Man, to be *Good and Evil* in their own Natures, antecedent to the Obligation of any Human Laws. Or in other Words, whether there be not ſome Actions which do carry along with them ſuch a clear and unalterable Reaſonableneſs and Excellency, as that they do approve themſelves to be Good and Lovely to any Unprejudiced Mind, and conſequently Mankind muſt be under an Univerſal and Eternal Obligation to perform them, and to avoid and ſhun their Contraries. As alſo, whether we have not all the reaſon in the World to believe that thoſe Actions, which the Mind of Man can thus diſcover to be Morally and Eſſentially Good, are agreeable to the Will of God, and directed by it: And to conclude, that the Deity alſo acts and proceeds in all Reſpects according to the ſame Univerſal and Eternal Dictates of Reaſon, and is Juſt and Good, Equitable and Righteous in all his Dealings with his Creatures; and *that he exerciſeth*

ciſeth theſe things in the Earth. This I take to be the true ſtate of the Caſe; and this is what we Aſſert, and our Adverſaries Deny; and what I ſhall now endeavour to prove.

In order to which, it muſt be allowed in the

1. Place, That Man is a thinking Being, and hath the Power of Reaſoning and Inference. It muſt be allowed alſo, that we are capable of Knowing this, and do moſt evidently diſcover ſuch a Power in our ſelves. And ſince all Intelligent Creatures do naturally deſire to be happy, we muſt do ſo too, and conſequently endeavour to obtain that Kind of Happineſs which is agreeable to our Natures and Faculties; *i. e.* a Happineſs that ſhall relate to our *whole Natures*, and not to the Body only: Now the Happineſs of any Being conſiſting in the free and vigorous Exerciſe of its Powers and Faculties, or in the Perfection of its Nature; and the Nature of Man being Reaſon, the Happineſs of Mankind muſt conſiſt chiefly in the free and vigorous Exerciſe of his Reaſoning Faculty; or being in ſuch a Condition as that we can do all things that are agreeable to, and avoid all ſuch things as are diſagreeable to it. Now all this ſuppoſed and granted, as I think none of it can be denied, it will plainly follow, that all ſuch Actions as do Univerſally approve themſelves to the Reaſon of Mankind, and ſuch as when duly examined and conſidered, do conſtantly and uniformly tend towards, and promote the Happineſs of Man, conſidered as to his whole Nature, and chiefly as to that part of him in which his Nature doth more properly conſiſt, which is his Rational and Underſtanding Faculty: Such Actions, I ſay, muſt neceſſarily be ſaid to be in their own Na-

ture *Good*; and their Contraries muſt be denominated *Evil*, after the ſame manner; for whatſoever is univerſally *Approved*, is univerſally *Good*: to call a thing *Good* being nothing elſe but to declare its conducibility to that end it was deſigned for. Now according to our Adverſary's Aſſertion, Men call that *Good* which promotes their own Advantage and Happineſs, and ſo no doubt it ought to be eſteemed; all that they miſtake in, being, that they don't underſtand wherein their true Happineſs conſiſts. And therefore if a Thing doth in its own Nature approve it ſelf to the impartial Reaſon of Mankind, and can on due Examination manifeſtly appear to conduce to the Intereſt, Advantage and Happineſs of Human Nature; ſuch a thing muſt by all Rational and thinking Men be pronounced *naturally and morally Good*; and its Reverſe, *Evil* in the ſame manner. And that this is the caſe in Reference to that which is commonly called *Moral Good and Evil*, will appear plain and evident when we ſhew,

2. That there are ſome Things and Actions which the Free and Unprejudiced Reaſon of all Mankind, cannot but acknowledge to be *Comely*, *Lovely*, and *Good* in their own Natures as ſoon as ever it conſiders them, and makes any Judgment about them. And this is what is apparent to the Obſervation of all Men to have been *ipſo facto* done; and the Truth of it cannot be denied: For have not all Nations in the World agreed in paying ſome kind of Worſhip and Veneration to the Deity? Was there ever any Place where, or Time when, *Obedience to Parents*, *Gratitude for Benefits received*, *Acts of Juſtice*, *Mercy*, *Kindneſs*, *and Good Nature*, were not accounted reaſonable, good

good and decent things? I know ſome Perſons have boldly told the World that 'tis quite otherwiſe, and that there are ſome whole Nations ſo Savage and Barbarous as to have no Notion of any Deity, who have no manner of Religious Worſhip at all, and who have no Notion or Idea of *Moral Good and Evil:* But when we conſider that theſe Accounts come originally only from a few Navigators, who probably did not ſtay long enough at thoſe Places to acquaint themſelves with the Language of the Natives, and who conſequently could not have much Knowledge of their Notions, Opinions, and Cuſtoms; it will be too hardy a Concluſion to inferr poſitively that Men pay no Worſhip to, nor have any Idea of a God, only becauſe they did not ſee them at their Devotions. And moreover, when we have had later and more accurate Accounts of ſome of thoſe Places, which do plainly diſprove the former Aſſertions, we have good reaſon, I think, to ſuſpend our aſſent to them. And then as to their Notions of Good and Evil, it will not follow that they account Stealth and Murder as good and comely things as Juſtice and Mercy, only becauſe theſe Relators had ſome of thoſe Acts committed on them. For commonly they themſelves ſhew them the way, by wickedly Robbing, Impriſoning and Murdering them; and therefore why the Poor *Indians* may not return ſome ſuch Actions upon their Enemies and Invaders, without being ſuppoſed to be quite Ignorant of the Difference between Good and Evil, I confeſs, I do not ſee. And by what too often appears from their own Relations and Books of Travels, the *Indians* have not more reaſon to be thought Savage and Barbarous, than thoſe that

give

give us ſuch an Account of them; for by their Actions they diſcover as poor Notions of Morality, as 'tis poſſible for any Men to have.

But after all, ſuppoſe the Fact true, as I do really believe it is not, That there is any Nation of Men ſo Stupid as to be quite devoid of any Notion of a God, or of the Difference between Good and Evil: All that can be concluded from hence is, that ſome Men may for want of Commerce with other Parts of the World, and for want of Thinking, and cultivating and exerciſing their Rational Faculties, degenerate into meer brute Beaſts; and indeed, as ſuch the Relators deſcribe them; according to whoſe Account of them, many Species of the Brute Creation diſcover more Underſtanding, and Act, if I may ſo ſpeak, more rationally; but it cannot be fairly argued from hence, that they *never have had* any Notion or Belief of theſe things; or that their Reaſons will not aſſent to the Truth of them *hereafter*, when their unhappy Prejudices may be removed, and they may become civilized by Commerce. Much leſs ſure will this Prove, that there is no Notion of a Deity, nor of Moral Good and Evil in all the other Parts of the World, and amongſt Men that can think, and do exerciſe their Reaſon and Underſtanding. Will not a General Rule ſtand its Ground tho' there be a few Exceptions againſt it? Will Men take their Meaſures to judge of Human Nature only from the Monſtroſities of it, from the worſt and moſt ſtupid Parts of Mankind? Men may as well argue that all Mankind are devoid of Arms or Hands, or are Univerſally Defective in any other Part of the Body, becauſe ſome few are daily born ſo, or rather have them cut off. We ſee there are often

Natural

Natural Defects in Mens Minds as well as their Bodies, and that ſome are born Fools and Idiots, as well as others Blind and Lame; and a great many we ſee make themſelves ſo by their own Fault; But ſure no one will conclude from hence, that all Mankind are Fools and Idiots, unleſs he be a degree worſe than one himſelf. And yet Men may even as juſtly make any of theſe abſurd Inferences, as to ſay, there is in the Minds of Men no Power to diſtinguiſh a Natural Difference between Good and Evil, only becauſe there are ſome Stupid and Barbarous People, among whom no ſuch thing can be diſcovered. For my part, I do moſt heartily believe, that 'tis impoſſible for a Rational and Thinking Mind, acting as ſuch, to be inſenſible of the Difference between Moral Good and Evil: I cannot Imagine that ſuch a Perſon can think it a thing indifferent in its own Nature, whether he ſhould Venerate, Love and Worſhip the God that made him, and from whom he derives all the Good he can poſſibly enjoy; or whether he ſhould Slight, Deſpiſe, Blaſpheme or Affront him. It ſeems utterly impoſſible to me, that any thinking and conſiderate Man, ſhould judge it an indifferent thing in its own Nature, whether he ſhould honour and reverence his Father, or abuſe him and cut his Throat: or that he can eſteem it to be as good and decent a thing to be Ungrateful or Unjuſt, as it is to acknowledge and to return a Kindneſs, to render every one their Due, and to behave our ſelves towards others, as we would have them do towards us.

I do not think that the Inſtances produced by a late Ingenious Writer, of ſome wild People's expoſing their Sick and Aged Parents to die by the Severities of

of Wind and Weather, nor of others who eat their own Children, are of force to prove that there is really and naturally no difference between Good and Evil, any more than I will believe that he cited thoſe Paſſages with a deſign to make the World think ſo; for I think, allowing the truth of all theſe Relations, no ſuch Inference can be thence deduced. A Practical Principle, of the Truth and Power of which a Man may be demonſtratively aſſured, may yet be over-born in ſome Reſpects by other Opinions which Ignorance and Superſtition may have ſet up in a Man's Mind. This Gentleman ſaith, *p.* 25. *Of Human Underſtanding*, That *a Doctrine having no better Original than the Superſtition of a Nurſe, or the Authority of an Old Woman, may by length of time grow up to the dignity of a Principle in Religion or Morality.* Now ſhould a precarious and wicked Opinion over-rule a Man in one or two particular Caſes, and carry him againſt the Rules of Morality, will it follow from thence that a Man doth believe thoſe Rules of no Natural Force, and that it is an Indifferent thing whether he obſerve them or not? Ought I to conclude, that becauſe I have read of a King that Sacrificed his Son to *Moloch*, that therefore he believed it as good and reaſonable a thing to burn his Children alive, as to preſerve, take care of them, and give them a good Education? Certainly, 'twould be a fairer and more reaſonable Inference, to conclude that his Reaſon and Natural Affection was over-power'd by his Idolatrous and Superſtitious Opinion; and that the reaſon why he did ſuch a Wicked and unnatural Action was becauſe he expected ſome very great Benefit for it from the Idol, or that he would Inflict ſome very great Judgment upon him,

if

if he did not do it. And ſo in the Caſes above-mentioned, one may well enough believe that thoſe Barbarous and Inhumane Wretches that Starved their Parents and Eat their Children; did not nor could not believe it was as good and reaſonable ſo to do, as it would be to preſerve them; but only that they were under the Power of ſome Wicked Superſtition, or Abominable Cuſtom that had unhappily crept in among them; which they thought it a greater Evil to break (if they thought at all) than they did to Act againſt their Judgment, Natural Reaſon, and Affection. For *this way* (as he obſerves) *'tis eaſie to imagine how Men, may come to worſhip the Idols of their own Minds, grow fond of Notions they have been long acquainted with there, and ſtamp the* Characters *of Divinity upon Abſurdities and Errors*, &c. p. 26. So that I cannot ſee any Conſequence at all, in aſſerting the Non-exiſtence of Moral Good and Evil, from a few Barbarous and Ignorant Wretches doing ſome Actions that bear hard on the Rules of Morality: For notwithſtanding that they may be loſt in a great meaſure in ſome places; yet theſe things, and many others that might be inſtanced in, do certainly carry ſuch Self-evidence along with them; that a free and unprejudiced Mind muſt needs perceive which way to determine, as ſoon as ever they can be propoſed to it, and conſidered of by it. For any one in the World that doth but underſtand the meaning of the Terms in any of the lately mentioned Moral Propoſitions, will be demonſtratively aſſured of the Truth of them: And he will ſee as

clearly *that God is to be worſhipped*, that *Parents are to be honoured*, and in a word, that *we ought to do to others as we would be done unto*, as he aſſents to the Truth of ſuch Axioms as theſe: That *a Thing cannot be and not be, at the ſame Time*; That *Nothing hath no Properties*; And that *the whole is greater than any one, and equal to all its Parts taken together:* For the Reaſon why all Mankind allow theſe as *firſt Principles*, is becauſe their Truth is ſo very Apparent and Evident, that they approve themſelves to our Reaſon at firſt ſight. And ſo, I think, do all theſe Great Principles in Morality; they certainly affect impartial and conſiderate Minds, with as full a Conviction as any of the former can poſſibly do. And would no more have been denied or diſputed than the others are, had they not been *Rules of Practice*, and did they not require ſomething to be *done*, as well as to be *believed*. For he that rightly underſtands what is meant by the words *God*, and *Worſhip*; will ſee the Neceſſary connexion between thoſe Terms, or the Truth of this Propoſition, *God is to be worſhipped*, as evidently as he that knows what a *Whole* and a *Part* is, will ſee that the *Whole muſt be greater than a Part*. And no Propoſition in Geometry can be more demonſtratively clear, than theſe Moral ones are, to Men that are not wilfully Blind and wickedly Prejudiced againſt ſuch Practical Truths. For as one hath well obſerved (*a*), *Morality may be reckoned among thoſe Sciences that are capable of Demonſtration.* And that *theſe Moral Truths have a ſtronger connexion one with another*,

(*a*) Eſſay of Human Under-ſtand. p. 274, 275.

ther, and a more neceſſary Conſequence from our Idea's, and come nearer to a perfect Demonſtration than is commonly imagined; inſomuch, that as he ſaith in another place, *They are capable of real Certainty as well as Mathematicks* (*b*). Now if the caſe be ſo, as moſt certainly it is; it will plainly follow, that Thoſe things that do thus demonſtratively approve themſelves to the unprejudiced Reaſon of all Mankind, muſt be *good* and *lovely* in their own Natures, or Morally ſo, antecedent to the Obligation of Human Laws, Cuſtoms or Faſhions of particular Countries.

(*b*) Pag. 284.

And in this plain Diſtinction between Good and Evil, which our Reaſon, when duly uſed, Impowers us thus at firſt ſight to make, is founded that which we call Conſcience: which is a kind of an Internal Senſation of *Moral Good and Evil.* And *this Candle of the Lord, ſet up by himſelf in mens Minds, and which 'tis impoſſible for the Breath or Power of man wholly to extinguiſh* (*a*); is as Natural to a Rational Mind, as the Senſe of Pain and Pleaſure is to the Body; for as that is given us by the Author of our Natures to preſerve us from bodily Evils, and to capacitate us to enjoy ſuch a Kind of Happineſs; ſo Conſcience is our Guard againſt the Invaſions of Moral or Spiritual Evils; and will, if rightly followed, give us always ſo much Peace, Joy, and Satisfaction of Soul, as cannot poſſibly be had any other way. But again;

(*a*) Eſſay of Hum. Underſtand. *p.* 276.

2. It is moſt plain alſo, That there are ſome things which do Univerſally and Naturally tend to promote the Happineſs and Welfare of Mankind, and

others that do equally contribute to its Miſery: And conſequently on this Account we muſt eſteem the former to be really and naturally *Good* things, and the latter, *Evil.* Now one would think, that one need not ſpend Time to prove that the Practice of Moral Virtue, doth Uniformly and Naturally promote the Happineſs of Mankind, and that Vice and Immorality do as naturally and neceſſarily tend to its Miſery. For doth not any one plainly perceive, that there is no Virtue, or Part of Morality, but what hath ſome particular Good and Advantage to Human Nature, connected with it, as all Vice and Wickedneſs hath the contrary? Doth not a ſincere Veneration for that Supream and Almighty Being, from whom all our Powers and Faculties are derived, and a conſciouſneſs to our ſelves that we are obedient to his Will, and conſequently under his Protection; doth not this, I ſay, bring conſtant Peace, Comfort and Satisfaction along with it? and prove our greateſt Support under any Troubles and Afflictions? And on the other hand, hath not generally ſpeaking he that is guilty of Impiety, Profaneneſs and Irreligion, diſmal Doubts and dire Suſpicions in his Mind of impending Puniſhments, and Miſery? Is not ſuch a Mans whole courſe of Action, a continual ſtate of War in his own Breaſt, and a conſtant Contradiction of his Reaſon and his Conſcience? What hath ſuch a Perſon to ſupport him, or to give him any comfort on a Sick or a Death-Bed, when the hurry and amuſements of ſenſual Pleaſure are over; and when all the treacherous Enjoyments of this World begin to fail him, and diſcover themſelves

to

to be counterfeit and fictitious? But again, is it not plain to every one, that Truth, Juſtice and Benevolence, do Naturally and Eſſentially conduce to the well being and Happineſs of Mankind, to the mutual ſupport of Society and Commerce, and to the Eaſe, Peace and Quiet of all Governments and Communities? and doth it not as clearly appear on the contrary that breach of Truſts and Compacts, lying and falſifying of Mens Words, Injuſtice, Oppreſſion, and Cruelty, do inevitably render that Place or Society miſerable where they abound? What an unexpreſſible wretchedneſs would Mankind be in, if *Hobbs* his *State of Nature* were in Being amongſt us? *i. e.* a State wherein no Man would have any Notion of Moral Virtue, but where every one ſhould think himſelf to have a *right to all things*, and conſequently be ſtill endeavouring to obtain them; and making it his daily buſineſs to vex, rob, ruin and deſtroy all who oppoſed his Will, and they alſo be doing continually the ſame things againſt Him, and againſt one another. A Man muſt be ſtupidly and wilfully blind before he can aſſert ſuch *a State* as this, to be as happy and advantageous to Mankind, as where all Moral Virtues are obſerved and exerciſed: And therefore Mr. *Hobbs* himſelf is forced to allow that rational Agents would have recourſe to the Enacting of Laws for the due Government and Regulation of Society. But how theſe Laws ſhould ever come into Peoples Heads, that are ſuppoſed to have no manner of Notion of any diſtinction between *Good* or *Evil*, *Juſt* or *Unjuſt*; and when there is in reality no ſuch thing, is what I cannot

not poſſibly conceive. On the contrary, I think that the Conſtant and Univerſal Support, that theſe Moral Virtues have always had from Human Laws, is a moſt demonſtrative Argument that Men have always thought them Subſtantially and Morally Good and Excellent in themſelves; and that they do Naturally and Eternally conduce to the good of all Societies. Indeed, ſome things may be, and often are Enacted or Prohibited by Human Laws, that have no real nor Intrinſick Goodneſs, nor Natural Evil in them; but are only *Good* and *Evil*, according to ſome particular Circumſtances and Exigencies of Affairs. And thus God himſelf was pleaſed to appoint the *Jews* many Rites and Obſervances that had not any real or Intrinſick goodneſs in them, but only were neceſſary for the preſent Circumſtances and Condition of that Nation. But then theſe are every where in Holy Writ, Poſt-poned to Moral Virtue (*a*), declared by God himſelf to be of much leſſer Value; and whenever there was a Competition between them, *theſe* were to give place to *thoſe*; which were properly ſpeaking good in their own Natures, and of Univerſal and Eternal Obligation; whereas the others were only good *pro hic & nunc*. Therefore they are ſaid by the Apoſtle, *to be not Good*, i. e. in themſelves or in their own Natures; but only by Inſtitution. But this is not the Caſe as to ſuch Actions as we have been mentioning, which are called Morally *Good* or *Evil*; for theſe have been conſtantly and univerſally diſtinguiſhed by Humane Laws, and have never been confounded or changed. For can any Man

(*a*) Mich. 6. 8. Deut. 10. 12. 1 Sam. 15. 22. Pſal. 50. 8.

Man produce a Law that ever obtained univerſally againſt paying Adoration and Worſhip to the Deity? againſt Mens honouring their Parents, or againſt their being Juſt, Good, Merciful, and Righteous in their Dealings with one another? *Againſt ſuch things*, as St. *Paul* tells us, *there is no Law.* Nor is it poſſible for our Adverſaries to ſhew us, that the contrary Immoralities were ever univerſally thought good and lawful; or allowed and eſtabliſhed by any General Authority whatſoever; and ſhould the Reverſes to Moral Virtue be enjoined as Laws, and every one commanded to be Unjuſt, Oppreſſive, and Cruel, as now he is enjoyned the contrary, any one may imagine what would be the diſmal Conſequences of it.

3. But again, Another Argument for the Natural diſtinction between Good and Evil, may be drawn from the Conſideration of our Paſſions and Affections: For theſe are ſo framed and contrived by our Wiſe Creator, as to guide and direct us to Good, and to guard and preſerve us from Evil by a kind of Natural Inſtinct, which we find in our ſelves frequently previous to all Reaſoning and Conſideration. Thus, we perceive a ſtrange Horrour, and very ungrateful Senſations ſeize upon us immediately, on the ſight of a Scene of Miſery, or a Spectacle of Cruelty; and as ſoon as ever our Ears are entertained with the doleful Relation of ſuch Actions; ſo alſo an Inſtance of great Injuſtice or very baſe Ingratitude, raiſes a juſt Indignation in us againſt the offending Perſon; and we cannot avoid being uneaſily moved and affected in ſuch Caſes.

Caſes. While on the contrary, a very pleaſing Satisfaction of Soul ariſes in us, when we ſee, or hear of an Inſtance of great Kindneſs, Juſtice, Generoſity, and Compaſſion. Now this Sympathizing of our Natural Affections with our Reaſon; and their approving and diſapproving the very ſame things that it doth, is a very convincing Argument that there is an Eſſential difference between Actions as to their being *Good or Evil*, and that we have a plain Knowledge of ſuch a diſtinction. For no doubt God implanted theſe Paſſions and Affections in our Natures, and gave them this *Turn* which we plainly perceive they have, in order to prepare the way for our Reaſons more thoroughly aſſuring us of the Natural Goodneſs and Excellence of Moral Virtue, when it comes to be Ripe, and ſufficient for that End; and in the mean time, to keep Children and Young Perſons, in whom we perceive theſe Natural Efforts to be very ſtrong, by a kind of Anticipation or Natural Inſtinct from doing ſuch things as their Reaſon, freely exerciſed, will afterwards condemn them for.

And now upon the whole, there being thus plainly proved an Eſſential and Natural Difference between Moral Good and Evil; and that the Reaſon of all Mankind freely and impartially exerciſed doth agree in this Point, that Morality conduces to the Happineſs, and Immorality to the Miſery of Human Nature: We may very juſtly conclude from hence, that all other Rational Agents muſt judge of *Good* and *Evil* after the ſame manner,

manner, and plainly diſtinguiſh *one* from the *other*. And they alſo muſt Know and Underſtand that their Perfection and Happineſs (though they may differ in ſome Circumſtances from us) doth conſiſt in Acting according to the Eternal Rules of Right Reaſon and Moral Virtue. For if the Caſe be not ſo, ſeveral Rational Natures all derived from the ſame Deity, may come to make contradictory Judgments, even when they Act according to the Great and Common Rule of their Nature. But the Principle of Right Reaſon, at this Rate, would be the moſt precarious thing imaginable, and Men could never poſſibly be aſſured that they were in the Right in any Point, or knew any thing at all. Aſſuredly therefore this Great Rule of Right Reaſon that God hath given his Creatures to govern and direct themſelves by, is no ſuch uncertain thing, is in no reſpect Contradictory to it ſelf; but muſt be Uniformly and Conſtantly the ſame in all Beings, that are endowed with it, when it is rightly and perfectly followed.

And from hence alſo we cannot but conclude, that the ſame Eternal, Conſtant and Uniform Law of Right Reaſon and Morality that God hath given as an Univerſal Guide to all Rational Beings, muſt alſo be in Him in the greateſt and moſt exquiſite Perfection. And that, not only becauſe all Perfections and Excellencies in the Creatures muſt neceſſarily be in that Firſt Being from whom they are derived, as I have already proved; But alſo, that if it were not ſo, God muſt be ſup-

poſed to have given us a Rule of Action that is contrary to his own Nature, or at leaſt vaſtly different from it. And that he hath contrived our Powers and Faculties ſo, as to deceive us in the moſt Material and Eſſential Points, and indeed hath left us no poſſible way of knowing the Truth of any thing whatſoever.

For, If when, as I have ſhewn above, God hath not only fixed in our Natures, a Deſire of Happineſs; but alſo diſpoſed them ſo, that every Power Faculty and Capacity of them convinces us that the Exerciſe of Moral Virtue is the Way, and indeed, the only Way to make us entirely happy. If I ſay after all this, there be no ſuch things as Moral Virtue and Goodneſs, but that all Things and Actions, both in us and the Deity, are purely and in their own Natures Indifferent; 'tis plain, *Reaſon* is the moſt ridiculous thing in the World, a Guide that ſerves to no manner of Purpoſe but to bewilder us in the Infinite Mazes of Errour, and to expoſe us to Roam and Float about in the boundleſs Ocean of Scepticiſm, where we can never find our Way certainly to any Place, nor direct our Courſe to the Diſcovery of any Truth whatſoever. But this not being to be ſuppoſed of the Deity, who contains in himſelf all Poſſible Excellence and Perfection; it muſt needs be that our Reaſon will direct us to conclude the Deity alſo guided and directed in all his Proceedings by the Eternal Rules of Right Reaſon and Truth: and conſequently that He will and doth always *exerciſe loving Kind-*

neſs,

neſs, Judgment and Righteouſneſs in the Earth; as the Prophet here ſpeaks.

And indeed, the *Hobbian* Notion of a Deity guided only by Arbitrary Will Omnipotent, without any regard to Reaſon, Goodneſs, Juſtice, and Wiſdom, is ſo far from attributing any Perfection to God, or as they pretend, being the Liberty and Sovereignty of the Deity; that it really introduces the greateſt Weakneſs and Folly, and the moſt Britiſh Madneſs that can be! for what elſe can be ſuppoſed to be the Reſult of Irreſiſtible and Extravagant Will, purſuing the moſt fortuitous Caprichio's of Humour, without any Wiſdom, Ends, or Deſigns to Regulate its Motions by?

And of this the Ancient Heathens were ſo ſenſible, that they always connected *Goodneſs* with the Idea that they had of an *Omnipotent Mind's* being Supream Lord over all things in the Univerſe; for *Mind* not *guided* and *directed* by *Goodneſs* was, according to them, not νῦς but ἄνοια, *mere Folly and Madneſs*, and conſequently no true Deity. There is a Remarkable Paſſage of *Celſus*'s to this purpoſe, which though introduced upon another Deſign, yet very clearly ſhews the Idea that the Heathens had of the Goodneſs and Wiſdom of the Deity. *God*, ſaith he, *can't do evil things, nor will any thing contrary to Nature (or Reaſon)* —— *for God is not the Preſident or Governour of Irregular or Inordinate Deſires; nor of erroneous Diſorder and Confuſion, but of a Nature truly Juſt and Righteous.* —— ἀλλ' ὅτι γε τὰ αἰσχρὰ ὁ Θεὸς δύναται, οὐδὲ τὰ παρὰ φύσιν βούλεται.

---- οὐ γὰρ τῆς πλημμελοῦς ὀρέξεως, οὐδὲ τῆς πεπλανημένης ἀκοσμίας, ἀλλὰ τῆς ὀρθῆς καὶ δικαίας φύσεως Θεὸς ἐστιν ἀρχηγέτης. *Orig. contr. Cels.* lib. 5. p. 240. *Cantabr.*

Excellently to the same Purpose, is that Saying of *Plotinus*, The *Deity doth always act according to his Nature or Essence, and that Nature or Essence discovereth Goodness and Justice in all its Operations: for indeed, if these things should not be there* (i. e. *in God*) *where can they else be found?* Ποιεῖ τὸ Θεῖον ὡς πέφυκε, πέφυκε δὲ κατὰ τὴν αὐτοῦ οὐσίαν, ἢ τὸ καλὸν ἐν τοῖς ἐνεργείαις αὐτοῦ καὶ τὸ δίκαιον συνεκφέρει, εἰ γὰρ μὴ ἐκεῖ ταῦτα, πῶ ἂν εἴη; p. 265. *Ficin.*

And 'tis plain that the Heathens had a true Notion, that the Deity must be a Good, Just and Righteous Being; because several of the old Atheists, as *Protagoras*, &c. argued against the Existence of a Deity, from the Worlds being *so ill Made and Ordered as it is*, and from there being so much Evil and Misery among Mankind, as they pretended to find in the World; but now there had been no manner of force in this Argument, and it had been ridiculous to bring it, if, both the Atheistical Proposers of it, and their Antagonists, had not had a clear Notion that Goodness, Justice and Righteousness are naturally included in the Idea of a God. Accordingly *Vaninus* tells us, That *Protagoras* used to say, *Si Deus non est unde igitur Bona? si autem est, unde Mala*, Amph. Ætern. Provid. *p.* 90. And the same thing *Tully* tells us also (*Lib. De Nat. Deorum*) that *Diagoras* used to object against a Deity. All which sufficiently proves that they were all Agreed that there was some common

common Standard of Good and Evil; and that the Notion of a Deity had always theſe Attributes of Goodneſs and Juſtice connected with it.

And if this be ſo, as undoubtedly it is, we ſhall gain one more good Argument for this Natural and Eternal Diſtinction between Good and Evil, and a yet much Nobler Foundation for Morality. For we cannot but think, that a God who hath Perfect Goodneſs, Juſtice and Mercy, Eſſential to his Nature, and who hath Created ſeveral Orders of Being in the World, to make them Happy, and in order to diſplay his own Glory, by his Juſt, Kind and Gracious Dealing with them: we cannot but think, I ſay, that God will give to thoſe of his Creatures, whom he hath endowed with Reaſon, and a Power of Liberty and Choice, ſuch a Method of knowing his Will, (the Way that leads to their own Happineſs) as that they ſhall never be Miſtaken about it, but by their own groſs Fault and Neglect. And alſo that he will make the difference between Good and Evil, and between Virtue and Vice ſo plain and conſpicuous, that no one can miſs of the Knowledge of his Duty, but by a wilful Violation of thoſe Powers and Faculties God hath graciouſly implanted in his Nature. And all this we ſee God hath Actually done: and indeed much more; having over and above connected very great Rewards with the Practice of Virtue and Morality. And hath either naturally planted in the Minds of Men a Notion of ſome future State, or elſe hath given our Nature ſuch a Power, as that we may attain to ſuch

ſuch a Notion : for we find a very plain Belief and Expectation of ſuch a State, among many of the Ancient and Modern Heathens.

And over and above all this, he hath alſo given us a clear Revelation of his Will in the Holy Scripture, *that ſure Word of Prophecy and Inſtruction*, whereby we may, if we will, gain a yet plainer Knowledge of our Duty, be more perfectly Inſtructed in the Method of Eternal Salvation, and find alſo much higher Encouragements, and much greater Helps and Aſſiſtances than we had before in the State of Nature. And all this is vouchſafed us to enforce the more effectually the Practice of Moral Virtue, and to enable us more perfectly to perform thoſe Things, which the Univerſal Reaſon of Mankind approves as Good, Lovely and Advantageous to Human Nature.

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